

0 1

by

Paul Litherland

Are you connected? What's your e-mail address? I'll fax you that text...

In this age of hyper communication-chat groups, video conferencing, cheap long distance, cell phone messaging--the idea of not being in touch is blasphemy, an impossibility! However, as Paul Litherland reveals in his new multimedia performance, 0 1, this contact with others is suspiciously lacking in anything physical. Instead, we are reduced to transmitters of messages, our physical presence irrelevant, even annoying

In 0 1 the digital stream is slowed down and made visible. Visual artist Paul Litherland, and musician Alexander MacSween, sit down at drum kits equipped with electronic triggers and beat out messages via a computer with a midi connection. Using drum rhythms, converted to binary code, the drummers can choose to spell out words, control video sequences, or create texts from predetermined lists of words. The texts and images are projected on to screens, one for each performer.

With 0 1, Paul Litherland follows his preoccupation in understanding a basic human need, a need we carry with us all our lives... the need to be heard ... the need to be understood. We have been given the tools to produce a monumental volume of messages, but the volume deafens the listener and we remain unsatisfied.

PAUL LITHERLAND

01

performances musicales et visuelles

avec

ALEXANDER MACSWEEN

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les 22, 23 et 24 mars 2001
à 20h00

prix d'entrée : 4 \$

En cette époque d'«hypercommunication» ne pas être en contact est une aberration, voire une impossibilité! Cependant, ce type de communication implique une perte de matérialité. Nous en sommes presque réduits à être des transmetteurs de messages et notre présence physique devient presque accessoire, voire même gênante.

Dans la performance intitulée *01*, le flot numérique est ralenti et rendu visible. L'artiste Paul Litherland et le musicien Alexander MacSween sont installés à leurs batteries équipées de contacts électroniques et envoient des messages à un ordinateur. Utilisant les rythmes des percussions convertis en code binaire, les batteurs peuvent choisir d'épeler des mots, de créer des textes à partir de listes de mots prédéterminés et de les relier à des images projetées sur deux écrans, un pour chaque performeur.

Paul Litherland poursuit ses préoccupations qui l'amènent à questionner et comprendre ce besoin primaire de l'homme, besoin qui nous habite toute notre vie durant, celui d'être entendu, d'être compris. Les moyens techniques que nous avons élaborés produisent et diffusent une quantité phénoménale de messages, mais cette prolifération finit par assourdir l'auditeur, le positionnant, à la limite, hors-circuit.

Paul Litherland est un artiste visuel dont le travail en photographie et en multimédia aborde les thèmes de la vulnérabilité et du machisme. Un travail récent intitulé Security/Insecurity (48 heures / 48 artistes, Montréal, 1999) mettait en relation des gardes de sécurité dormant sur le sol et l'image d'un arbre émondé mais bien portant flottant au-dessus de leur tête.

Alexander MacSween est musicien et compositeur. En tant que batteur, il se produit avec le quintette Sloth is the Love ainsi que le duo Detention. En tant que compositeur, il a travaillé récemment avec le chorégraphe Stéphane Deligny pour lequel il a composé la musique pour la pièce Anamnesis, présentée en janvier 2001 au Centre Calixa-Lavallée.



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www.cam.org/~b312
la galerie est ouverte du mardi
au samedi de 12 h à 18 h

For thousands of years people, separated by many kilometers, communicated with each other through drumbeats. Loud, soft, with pitch bends and with timing, drums would send messages about travellers, invaders or celebrations. Today, separated by even greater distances, we are still sending messages with a percussion instrument: The computer keyboard.

There are two kinds of beats, the beat and the non-beat, the 1 and the 0. Thanks to a system we know as binary code, series of 1's and 0's are combined to represent letters, words, and images. We use them to order pizzas, send rockets to Mars and chat online.

Babble is created and produced by Paul Litherland. Percussionist Alexander MacSween and Litherland perform the piece on electronic drum kits accompanied by Jean-Philippe Thibault on the computers. Each hit sends a signal to a computer, which in turn transforms the signals into elements of messages. A hit can produce a letter, a word or even control a video clip. Both performers play in front of projection screens that display the texts and video messages coming from their respective drum kits.

Babble explores the codes of various languages, the technologies of communication, and how these technologies transform our messages and often fail us in our attempts to relate to each other. *Babble* builds a bridge between old technologies and new ones. It is a multimedia performance about speaking and trying to send messages. It is about the need to be heard and understood.

BABBLE

A multimedia performance by Paul Litherland

Babble is a performance created by Paul Litherland, and developed by Litherland and percussionist Alexander MacSween. They perform *Babble* on electronic drum kits connected to computer equipment. As the performers play their drums, the hits are converted to MIDI signals and sent to the computers, which in turn transform the signals into elements of messages. A hit can produce a '0', a '1', a word, or control a video clip. One element of the performance uses the "ASCII Writer", a program that interprets the drum beats as the 0's and 1's of ASCII binary code. (ASCII is one of the languages used by the computer to interpret the input from the keyboard.) As the 8-bit sequences of digits are played in musical time, the performers generate letters and short texts that are projected on the screens behind them. Other performance elements use the drumbeats to control video sequences, allowing the performers to transform the video messages into musical and aesthetic arrangements.

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This part of the performance is called ASCII writer. ASCII is one of the languages the computer uses to communicate with the keyboard. It's a language of eight 0's and 1's that are combined to make up 256 different text characters or symbols. What we are doing here is playing these 0's and 1's to create texts.

Spoken texts with talking head:

This is a multimedia piece called Babble. It's performed by Alexander MacSween and myself, and we're accompanied by Jean Philippe Thibault on the computers. It's a multimedia work where we have drum kits hooked up to computers, and the computers are sending video signals to projectors, and projecting them on screens beside each of us.

This is an interactive multimedia piece, so as we play, as we make mistakes, all of that goes up on the screen behind us. I want this piece to be about the way we communicate to each other, and the technologies we use to communicate, and how those technologies often fail us in our attempts to relate to each other. It's about the need to be heard, and the need to be understood.

One of the pieces in the performance is called ASCII writer, and ASCII is one of the languages that the computer uses to communicate with the keyboard. What it is is a series of 256 combinations of eight 0's and 1's